



Shipton Bellinger Primary School

Governor Visits Policy

Summer 2025

The Context of a Governor Visit

At Shipton Bellinger Primary School our aim is for the Governing Body to have an understanding of all aspects of school life. The Governing Body have responsibility for the direction, policies and standards of the school and are accountable for its conduct and performance. Governor visits are a way to see how the school operates on a day-to-day basis. Through individual governor visits to the School, we aim to:

- Improve governor knowledge of the ethos of the school and awareness of the work on the curriculum
- Assist the whole governing body to fulfil its statutory roles
- Assess the effectiveness of the current School Development Plan
- Improve governor understanding of the needs of the school and the priorities for the future of the School Development Plan
- Improve governor links with staff, pupils and parents
- Help governors to be better able to support the school community
- Highlight the need for particular resources.

Governor Visits

- Governors are always welcome to visit the school;
- Governors should aim to visit at least once a year during the working day, although most Governors will have specific responsibilities which will bring them into school more often;
- All governors to be offered an introductory visit soon after their appointment to the Governing Body as part of their introductory programme
- Specific invitations may be sent for some occasions
- Visits should to be planned, in advance, after liaison with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher
- A feedback form should be completed soon after the visit , for circulation to all Governors once the Headteacher has had an opportunity to comment
- A short summary report will be given at the next appropriate governing body meeting.

Potential benefits

For Governors, to :

- recognise and celebrate success of pupils and staff;
- build an effective relationships with the staff and a better understanding of the context in which they work;
- get to know how the pupils learn;
- monitor policies in action;
- inform decision making.

For Teachers, to :

- ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom;
- get to know governors;
- understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities;
- have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion;
- highlight the need for particular resources.

A "Health warning" about Governor visits:

Governors will try not to

- Make judgements about quality of teaching – we are not inspectors
- Check on the progress of your own child
- Pursue a personal agenda
- Monopolise teachers' time
- Interrupt during teaching time
- Make promises, or speak, on behalf of the Governing Body

Focus of Visits

Visits as a Governor often be focused on specific priorities from the School Strategic Plan or responsibilities, such as Safeguarding of Health & Safety. There will be times when the visit is less focussed, for example attending open evenings and parents'/carer evenings as Governor.

Part of the role of a governor is gathering evidence from different sources, in order to evaluate the school's performance. "Triangulating" evidence helps provide a perspective to reduce the chance that the 'picture' of the school is not distorted or biased.

Guidelines for conducting a Governor visit

Preparing for a visit

- Be clear about the purpose of the visit using the feedback sheet.
- All visits must be arranged in advance with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to discuss arrangements for the visit
- Use the school website to get background information about things such as the staff you might meet; the names of the classes the latest projects and Ofsted and LLP reports.

- Most visits take place in the classroom and staff should have been informed of the date and purpose of the visit. This will have enabled staff to prepare any information related to the focus of the visit and to set up a programme for the governor. This might include:
 - Supporting a group of children on a set task
 - Informal observation of children at work
 - Opportunities to speak to children on their work in progress
 - Opportunities for observing displays of work in the classroom, which show progress over time.
- If required, be present at the beginning of a lesson to enable the teacher to introduce them to the class and explain the reason for their presence.
- Be aware of the need for confidentiality of what they see and hear.
- Try not to disrupt the lesson in progress.

After the Visit

- Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?
- Consider the purpose of the visit and whether it has been achieved
- Thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a governor. Be open, honest, and positive
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind.

Reporting your visit

Write a short summary 'as a lay governor' of what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made using the focus of the feedback sheet.

- If you have any concerns please raise them with the Headteacher before passing your feedback sheet to the school.
- Be prepared to discuss your findings at the next appropriate governing body meeting.